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SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTING THE PRESIDENT'S CAIRO VISION IN MOROCCO

REF: A. 09 STATE 071325

[B.](#) 09 CASABLANCA 0230

[C.](#) 09 RABAT 0667

[D.](#) 09 RABAT 0638

[E.](#) 09 RABAT 0490

[¶](#)1. Summary: Pursuant to President Obama's Cairo Speech and the Secretary of State's remarks in Marrakesh at the Forum for the Future, the U.S. Mission in Morocco continues to collaborate with Moroccan counterparts from civil society, government, media and academia to support a wealth of programs that are fulfilling these directives. Moreover, we have several additional initiatives in the pipeline. Our main efforts center around confronting extremism in all its forms by enhancing collaboration on women's issues, economic development, science and technology, education and literacy, cultural exchanges, citizen journalism and civil society. We continue to believe that the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) (Ref C) could be a valuable partner in our efforts. End Summary.

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Increasing Women's Participation  
in the Economy and Governance  
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[¶](#)2. In Cairo, President Obama asserted that our common prosperity can only be advanced if women in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region reach their full potential. For Mission Morocco, this means providing support to expand women's participation in governance, increase literacy for girls, and to empower young women through employment and entrepreneurship. Through a program focused on Local Governance, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is developing training programs aimed at building the capacity of newly elected officials, especially women. Morocco is making its own efforts to expand women's political participation; this will require that women candidates and elected officials increase in numbers under new decentralization reforms, which are the key to promoting women's participation in local governance. Our programs will include supporting piloting and replication of participatory tools to engage women and youth in local governance, encouraging the development of innovative procedures and rules that enhance participatory practices that would engage women and youth, and strengthening the capacities of communal and regional elected officials, particularly elected women, to serve as successful candidates but also as effective public servants once elected. Our Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), which successfully trained more than 3,000 woman candidates prior to the June 2009 communal elections, will also provide small grants to complement USAID's projects to empower women. In particular, MEPI and USAID aim to support the newly elected women officials to become effective in local government while also supporting efforts to opening up new avenues to women's participation in politics and government. At the same time, USAID is targeting its political party strengthening program at increasing women's role in political parties.

¶3. The Public Affairs Section (PAS) allocated almost USD 100,000 in FY 2009 toward a two-way exchange between Moroccan and U.S. specialists in combating violence against women through programs targeting offenders. This program will continue into mid-CY 2010. In support of this effort, PAS placed on December 15 an IIP-generated article, entitled "MENA Organizations Work to Abolish Violence Against Women; U.S. partnerships aid region-wide effort." The article described a MEPI-funded project implemented by the U.S. NGO "Global Rights" to conduct grassroots legal rights education for Moroccan women. PAS is exploring a partnership with the U.S. NGO "Empower Peace" to bring together young women via its Women2Women (W2W) program, possibly through a regional conference in Morocco. PAS youth sports programs in 2010 will emphasize soccer and basketball for girls -- and young women coaches -- as a means toward community development and highlighting women in leadership roles. In the near future, the Millennium Challenge Cooperation (MCC) will award contracts to strengthen the national system for literacy and vocational education to benefit artisans and the general population, in particular women and girls. The U.S. Mission has also begun to discuss with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) potential collaboration to eradicate illiteracy for both men and women. Moreover, as noted above, the Political Section continues to reach out to women elected officials, especially those who benefited from MEPI-funded training.

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**Economic Development and Opportunity**  
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¶4. The President emphasized the importance of diversified economic development, which for Rabat is a crucial Mission Strategic Plan priority. Past and ongoing programs include the Peace Corps' Small

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Business Development Program, which brings business volunteers to Morocco to aid in developing sustainable micro-enterprises. Those volunteers also seek to promote sustainable models that make appropriate use of resources, and that emphasize basic small business practices in Morocco that will ultimately sustain themselves over the long-term.

¶5. Other programs are designed to stimulate economic growth and productivity. For example, through the MCC, the USG is currently advancing programs in Fruit Tree Productivity to stimulate growth in the agricultural sector and reduce volatility in agricultural production. The MCC is also working on an Artisanal Fisheries Program to modernize the means of catching, storing and marketing fish, thereby improving the quality of the catch, maintaining the value chain, and increasing fishermen's access to both local and export markets. It seeks to stimulate growth by leveraging the links between the craft sector, tourism and the Fez Medina's cultural, historic and architectural resources. It will also increase financial services for micro-enterprises in Morocco by addressing key constraints to the development of the broader, market-based financial sector. Finally, it will also help reduce high unemployment among young graduates and encourage a more entrepreneurial culture through two existing Moroccan government initiatives, Moukalawati (Moroccan Arabic for "my small business") and the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH). Moukalawati was initiated to increase competitiveness in the face of globalization and address high youth unemployment rates. The INDH is a GOM initiative aimed at creating opportunities for the poor, vulnerable and socially excluded.

¶6. USAID's Economic Growth program is broadly focused on poverty reduction and employment opportunities for youth. Through technical assistance and support to shifts in key economic policies, USAID aims at improving Morocco's economic enabling environment for investments and growth. This includes promoting the sustainable use of scarce water resources for agriculture and improving workforce skills to meet the demands of a modern economy.

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**Science and Technology**  
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¶7. The enablers for accelerated economic growth in Morocco and elsewhere in the MENA region are education and innovation, just as the President outlined in Cairo. To this end, Mission Morocco has embarked on an ambitious plan to support technological development in this Muslim-majority country as a means to help transfer ideas to the marketplace and create jobs. In November, the Mission supported the Moroccan Fulbright Alumni Association (MFAA) in holding a symposium to examine the role of science and technology research in Morocco's economic development. We have also collaborated with the MFAA to create a working group of prominent Moroccan researchers, business leaders, and government officials to evaluate Morocco's strengths and interests in science and technology collaboration with the U.S., and will report to the Department the working group's suggestions septel.

¶8. The President also announced the creation of Science Envoys to collaborate on programs that develop new sources of energy, create green jobs, produce clean water, and grow new crops. We continue to work with Moroccan counterparts to advance these types of science and technology-related initiatives in tandem with the Department and other Washington agencies. The first visit of Science Envoy Dr. Elias Zerhouni is tentatively scheduled for February 2010, and the Mission has noted an outpouring of interest in the visit as well as requests for participation in Dr. Zerhouni's program. In addition, we will host the first Embassy Science Fellow in Rabat in recent memory in February and March 2010, responding to a request from the Moroccan Department of Higher Education and Scientific Research to provide input and training on management of research grants.

¶9. The Mission has also facilitated collaboration between NASA and Moroccan universities on solar weather research, and is developing action plans to support training of researchers and enhance safety practices at Moroccan scientific laboratories under the Biosecurity Engagement Program and Chemical Security Engagement Program of the International Security and Nonproliferation Bureau (ISN). The USG (through ISN's Partnership for Nuclear Security, the National Nuclear Security Administration, and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory) continues its long-standing scientific and technical collaboration with Morocco's National Center for Nuclear Energy, Science and Techniques (CNESTEN), including building a training center, conducting workshops on topics including health physics and reactor operations, and providing funding for participation in international scientific conferences. Following discussions with ISESCO, the Rabat Mission has also proposed launching programs creating IT research grants, scholarships, and more assistance.

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Youth, Education and Cultural Exchange  
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¶10. In Cairo, the President stressed the need to increase exchange programs and scholarships within the education sector. In Morocco, USAID and PAS have supported and collaborated with various local partners to foster youth and educational activities, and exchange programs. Since 2008, PAS has funded and/or administered at least six projects aimed at promoting use of e-journalism and citizen journalism techniques among Moroccan regional journalists and youth, to promote oversight of local government activities and to involve youth as stakeholders in their communities. Post's new Facebook page, launched in July, already has over 960 Moroccan 'Fans' who regularly participate in on-line discussions on U.S. policy and American society; many student participants in a recent "America Day" in Fez attended after learning about the program on Facebook.

¶11. In the past, the U.S. Mission in Morocco has supported Peace Corps programs that mentor youth, women, local partners, and communities with participatory educational opportunities that develop their own capacity to improve their lives. Peace Corps and PAS (RELO) collaborate with the Moroccan government on summer English-language immersion camps, and the Mission is engaging with new secondary school-based English language clubs. The Mission also supports English-language teacher training in traditional religious schools administered by the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic

Affairs.

¶12. Equally important in these efforts is the mission's special effort to reach out to youth. USAID's Education Program focuses on the critical middle-school years for in-school youth and on the growing cohort of out-of-school youth aged between 15 and 24. Education sector activities will provide more relevant and higher quality educational opportunities for both of these groups. Within the formal education system, USAID's activities will improve quality through a nationwide program to enhance capacity in teacher training institutes; provide training for school leaders to enhance education quality in classrooms; and promote community involvement through civil society in school quality issues on the local level. The out-of-school youth education activity will expand educational opportunities for marginalized youth, who have never enrolled in school or who have left school without adequate basic education skills to continue their education or find employment. The program will build institutional capacity of existing youth-serving organizations; increase access to a variety of educational opportunities including basic education competencies, IT, language skills, entrepreneurship and employability training; and promote advocacy among and for youth on key issues for youth and education.

¶13. We recognize English is rapidly becoming an important tool to build communication and bridge differences across cultures. English teaching is a rapidly expanding sector in Morocco; post's English Access Micro-Scholarship (EAMS) Program is the oldest and among the largest in the world, with nearly 4,000 students expected to have participated by the end of 2010. With 1,700 students currently enrolled, EAMS functions as a cultural program and teaches English, leadership skills and cross-cultural understanding to Moroccans. The "YES" high school exchange program sends about 70 students annually to the U.S. and is now piloting the first group of U.S. students in Morocco. Active engagement with alumni of these and other programs, including MEPI, is a priority for 2010.

¶14. Preliminary talks with ISESCO have presented other opportunities, such as a conference on how to move forward with dialogue, an alliance of cultures and civilizations, a symposium on a new perspective of U.S.-Arab-Islamic Relations, and student and professorial exchanges between the U.S. and Islamic world.

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Civil Society  
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¶15. The U.S. Mission is dedicated to implementing President's Obama's commitment to bring together Christians, Muslims and Jews through dialogue, building bridges between peoples that will lead to action. A major focus of USAID's Democracy and Governance Program is a project entitled Strengthening Advocacy and Networking to Advance Democracy, known as SANAD (Arabic for "support"). This program is aimed at widening and deepening public dialogue and democratic practice by strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to mobilize, network and advocate. The project provides technical, organizational and financial support to CSOs, with a target of USD 1 million in grants over three years. SANAD

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has four major focus areas: civic action, marginalized youth, local governance and community participation in education quality. The project targets primarily urban and peri-urban areas, where youth are at greater risk, and urbanization brings challenges to decentralized local governance.

¶16. MEPI continues to be another important tool for implementing the Cairo objectives. Morocco gets the lion's share of MEPI funds for the Maghreb region because of its record of reform efforts. Small grants that focus on grassroots projects that are limited to one year enable flexibility for the Mission to target sectors that promote youth, women's empowerment, interfaith dialogue, entrepreneurship, technology transfer and educational reforms. This year the MEPI program in coordination with USAID collaborated with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and International Republican Institute (IRI) in an enormously successful program to

teach women the skills they need to run for office in the municipal elections. MEPI is also supporting the national tour of an anti-corruption play. New projects under consideration for MEPI local grant funding focus on promoting democratic expression among the youth, increasing entrepreneurship among women and youth, and tackling the culture of corruption. Meanwhile, ISESCO and the Government have also expressed interest in cooperating with the U.S. in childcare and health.

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